

TOUTLE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT #130



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September 16, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket 13-184

Dear Ms. Dortch,

Toutle Lake School District is a rural, public school district, serving grades K-12. High-speed connectivity is available to the District buildings via the K-20 system, but availability throughout the community is sporadic to non-existent for many households. The campus consists of eight buildings housing approximately 570 students with 90 full and part-time staff. The percentage of low-income households has risen from 15% to over 40% in the past few years, while the number of children coming to school with limited English capabilities has remained relatively constant. In addition, the racial background of the student population has not changed significantly. The school population is predominantly white 93%, with approximately 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 2% African American, and 1% Native American.

Our District provides a broad range of technology designed to provide student and staff access to instructional and research tools to learn 21st century career skills. Our District has been successful passing a Technology Levy every three years to support our expanding technology needs, but dependency on a voter-approved bond with a 60% passage threshold is considered fairly high risk.

This letter offers comments related to the FCC's effort to modernize the E-rate program.

We believe:

- Universal access to broadband is necessary to meet school reform and improvement goals. These goals include the development of K-12 programming able to prepare all students for college and 21st century careers.

"ALL CHILDREN CAN BE SUCCESSFUL"

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- The Demand for access to broadband is growing rapidly beyond the ability of schools to provide it, despite the cost advantage possible through the E-rate discount.
- A modernized E-rate program must be less burdensome for schools, and aligned more effectively to current and future K-12 education priorities. There is also a growing need to help schools plan and budget for technology.
- Today's demand for the cost benefit of the E-rate program exceeds available funding. Clearly, the amount of money available for schools must increase to meet state and local needs.

While the District appreciates the supplemental support E-rate provides, with limited staff and time, accessing E-rate for larger technology projects requires more expertise and time than we have available.

We agree that it is time to modernize the E-rate program and support positive change that benefits K-12 schools. We encourage you to move quickly as you complete your deliberations.

If you have any further questions about our district, please do not hesitate to contact me at s.grabenhorst@toutlesd.k12.wa.us or 360-274-6182 ext 1000.

Sincerely

Scott Grabenhorst
Superintendent